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ABSTRACT

A qualitative study was undertaken in a bilingual school for the deaf to examine how meaning is negotiated during literacy events in this setting. Analysis was conducted with reference to Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development, similar to the theory of scaffolding, in which one who is more "expert" enables one or more "apprentices" to learn or do more than they could on their own. Data were gathered through classroom observation, teacher interviews, and documentation of students' hearing status. The three teacher informants were third-, seventh- and ninth-grade teachers. It was found that each teacher used different kinds of leading (scaffolding) within routines to achieve linguistic purposes. One teacher's method featured basic development and awareness of language and communicative competence in the context of emerging literacy. A second approach was the use of discussion and discovery to help students negotiate meaning and develop metalinguistic awareness. The third was to build on pre-existing metalinguistic awareness to encourage negotiation of meaning in more advanced reading and writing, grounded in whole literature and students' own writing. These carefully selected and structured tasks provided the opportunity for more able language users to be models and act as teachers. Contains 17 references. (MSE)

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Running Head: NEGOTIATING MEANING IN A DEAF BILINGUAL SETTING

Negotiating Meaning in a Deaf Bilingual Setting

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Abstract

This qualitative study was conducted in a bilingual school for the Deaf. The research question was "How is meaning negotiated during literacy events in this setting?" Vygotsky saw language as a tool for mediating experience in social contexts. He described a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), similar to Bruner's scaffolding, in which one who is more 'expert' enables one or more 'apprentices' to learn/do more than they could on their own. Data was triangulated through observing classroom interactions, conducting interviews with teachers, and gathering relevant documentation. Initial data analysis reveals three distinctly different teachers creating routines within which scaffolding occurs.

Introduction/Review of Literature

The research question in this preliminary study is: How is meaning negotiated in a bilingual Deaf education setting? There are a number of factors which make this question significant. A bilingual/ bicultural policy states that American Sign Language (ASL) is the first language of Deaf students and should be the language of instruction. English is used and taught as a second language. In bilingual education in general, the use of a student's native language to learn about a second language is based on research which indicates that knowledge about one language (metalinguistic awareness) will contribute to the ability to learn about another language, that proficiency and literacy in one language will 'transfer' to another language (Barnitz, 1985; Cohen, 1987; Garcia & Padilla, 1985; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Vygotsky, 1962, as in Carrasquillo & Hedley, 1993). In this case, however, English is a linear sequential SVO word order which tends to be seen only in print by Deaf students, while ASL is a polysynthetic visual spatial language which technically has no print form (Newport & Meier, as in Slobin, 1985). Polysynthetic means that the morphology of the language is largely simultaneously organized. For example, in ASL verbs of motion, the shape of the hand is one morpheme and its path of movement is another. 'Transfer' may not occur as readily with no print correlate present.

More than the language issue, it is also important to consider the social context within which this study and the question exist. In the city where this study was conducted, there is a large number of deaf and Deaf people. According to Tajfel's theoretical notions of intergroup relations (1974, as in Genesee, 1987), individuals feel compelled to define themselves in terms of others, typically through categorization of self as part of a specific social group. In this case, it is necessary to understand that Deaf people are those who claim Deaf heritage, and regard Deafness as an identity rather than a disability. Part of that identity is the use of ASL as their first language, and the tendency to see other forms of sign (Manually Coded forms of English -MCEs) as neutered forms of communication. A person could be hard of hearing, but claim cultural Deafness by being a full participating member of the Deaf community, using ASL as a primary means of communication, and generally not wearing any type of hearing aid or

assistive device which would indicate Deafness as a disability. There are also 'deaf' people, who are audiologically deaf (unable to use what little hearing they have for any kind of communication purposes). These individuals likely sign and may use either ASL or MCEs but for their own reasons, choose not to be part of the Deaf community (either on a full or part time basis).

Ethnolinguistic vitality (Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977, as in Genesee, 1987) is defined as whatever makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity based on factors such as status, demographics, and institutional support. Status refers to number of prestige variables associated with the group (such as economic or social status). Demographic factors are related to sheer number of group members and to their geopolitical distribution. There is a large strong Deaf community in this city which enjoys social and economic status (tax credits for TVs with close captioning, TTYs etc; recognition of ASL as a second language at universities in the province). Institutional support factors refer to the group's representation in the various institutions of a nation, community, or territory. Service agencies for support of Deaf individuals and families in this city include a private non-profit organization which acts as a resource and network for Deaf individuals both in the city and across the province, a nursing home for Deaf senior citizens and a daycare for a d/Deaf children and their siblings in which a sign environment is maintained.

In 1989, within this context, a bilingual bicultural (bi/bi) policy was mandated for all schools with Deaf signing students. This has been a rather controversial topic through the years because MCEs were traditionally used in the belief that a strong base in English would spell 'success' for Deaf people in the hearing world. ASL was not acknowledged as an official language for some time, and there were many very angry Deaf individuals who felt as if their language and heritage were being relegated to second class status. Reading levels for Deaf students have consistently topped out at about the third grade level for Deaf students in the past. In general, many 'minority' language students have lower levels of reading achievement (Carter & Segura, 1979, as in Genesee, 1987). The institution of ASL as the language of instruction (making the 'minority' language 'major') was projected to make a positive difference in the

kind of progress made in trying to create literate students. According to Genesee (1987), the role of the student's native language in a bilingual setting is to encourage communication and therefore facilitate the negotiation of meaning. It should also promote a sense of belonging and well-being. Milk (as in Jacobson & Faltis, 1990) states that what needs to be examined in terms of bilingual students language use is not just to what extent they are exposed to one language or the other, but rather to what extent they are engaged in meaningful social interactions in and around a language. Social interactions (action with symbolic meaning) include negotiation of definitions and role taking (more negotiation) between humans (Gecas, 1981, Turner, 1978, as in Berg, 1990). The social interactions which occur in a whole language classroom setting provide opportunities for negotiation of meaning as students listen, speak, read and write together (Altwerger, Edelsky, & Flores, 1987; Newman, 1985, as in Carrasquillo & Hedley, 1993).

According to Vygotsky (1978), language as a tool for mediating experience born in the midst of everyday interactions. He posited that there is a zone of proximal development (ZPD) which refers to the potential of the learner (as a sort of apprentice) to achieve more in interaction with an adult or more able peer (expert) language user. The regular activities or daily routines provide a framework for learning while the things a teacher does (such as modeling, demonstrating, etc) provide scaffolding which makes the ZPD a place of successful learning. The role of knowledgeable peers can be to provide scaffolding in the form of feedback about reading and writing (is it clear, does it make sense?), and models of how to use a language more effectively in different situations etc.

Method

According to Spradley and McCurdy (1972), culture is the knowledge people use to decide how to behave and how to understand the behavior of those around them. This can also be seen as a tacit theory of the world in which they live (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). In qualitative research, where the researcher is the instrument, this tacit understanding of the world will influence what Spradley and McCurdy (1972) call selective observation and interpretation of any field site. This is in turn significant in

that the participants in a study will have their own tacit understanding of a cultural scene. Qualitative procedures allow the researcher share in this understanding in terms of how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives (Berg, 1995). According to Wax (1971), a researcher cannot "by his own will and determination alone, immerse himself in another living group or society. If he manages to squeeze, step, or even dip into a group of living people, it is because the people who are already there invite or let him in or, at least, move over and give him a place to stand." (pg. 43). It is always a process involving many negotiations between (accommodations and adjustments by) both the researcher and the participants in a study. The negotiation of roles in the school for the Deaf was based on past experience with the school and its staff. I explicitly told the participants that tapes would be destroyed when the research was completed in order to protect their privacy. I think this was clearly understood, though I know there was some nervousness about being on tape. The identity of participants and the confidentiality of data was ensured by coding the participants with letter assignments and pseudonyms. The explicit terms defined the research parameters; implicit understanding involved respect. Arrangements for sharing data and results with participants in the setting included sharing in the spring of 1996 when I went home, or at least sending a copy of the finished product. Presentation would be made if requested.

While the researcher will rarely be absolutely emic (insider), one can assert the reliability and validity of the patterns detected by gathering rich data ("thick description", Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) from a variety of sources, and carefully triangulating it. According to Berg (1995), this is what is known as having multiple lines of sight. Methods to collect data and investigate questions included observation, videotaping, interviews (with field notes), and documentation of hearing status. Twelve data sets (seven days of field notes, three interviews, and documentation) were generated during my brief stay at the school (Sept. 5-14, 1995).

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), field notes need to be detailed and accurate in their description of people and places and events. While I feel my notes have generally adequate detail, I

have struggled somewhat with data description vs. reflection/observer comments and analytic memos. A standardized open-ended interview format was used. According to Patton (1990), the characteristics of such an interview are that the exact wording and sequence of questions are determined in advance. All interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order (see Appendix). Questions are worded in a completely open ended format. The strengths of this format are that respondents answer the same questions, thus increasing comparability of responses. This is what I wanted. This format also facilitates organization and analysis of the data. The weakness of this format is that it has little flexibility in relating the interview to particular individuals and circumstances. Its standardized wording may constrain and limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answers. I debated about this, but ultimately felt this was the best way to get information which would be comparable.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data gathered during the course of a study usually require processing (recordings transcribed, field notes corrected and typed). Data was managed, organized, and reviewed through typing up field notes and maintaining a file of all notes. The process of reviewing the videotapes and noting patterns was completed Spring Quarter in Independent Study with Dr. Kretschmer. Analysis of fieldnotes and other data was completed based on methodology in the Qualitative series.

Setting/Context

This study was completed in a moderately sized Mid-western city in a western Canadian province. Approximate population of the city is 650,000. Residents include a mixture of immigrants and descendants of strong ethnic heritage, including French, German, Russian, Ukrainian, Greek, Italian, and so on. Most of Europe is strongly represented, as well as increasing numbers of Asian, African, and South American groups. In addition, there are First Nations (aboriginal) people in slightly smaller numbers--many of them from the far North. Among these individuals, there is a large number of 'deaf' and 'Deaf' people who have already been described in the Introduction/Review of Literature.

Physical Setting: The school for the Deaf is a government owned four-story building has been in the same location for more than 50 years. It is located in a middle to upper class neighborhood with a large park and golf course nearby. The building itself is a large stone structure surrounded by a sprawling playground and baseball field. Inside the building, the rooms are uniformly institutional, with sinks and paper towel dispensers, shelving lining the walls below windows and blackboards. Each room usually has one teacher desk, several student desks or tables, an overhead, and a file cabinet or two.

Calendar: The school year begins in September, and finishes at the end of June. This study was conducted during the very beginning stages of the school year, during the first half of September. The school day begins in classrooms at 9AM, and finishes at 3:30 to 3:45PM. Life is somewhat different for students, depending on whether they live in residence ('res' kids) or are day students. 'Res' kids are awakened by dorm staff between 7 and 8AM. Older students usually get up earlier in order to go for a run, and/or to shower and attend to hair and makeup, etc. while the younger students typically are allowed to sleep later and have an evening bath rather than anything in the morning.

For 'res' kids, breakfast is served in the kitchen on the 3rd floor. Older students take care of themselves; dorm staff play 'mother' to the younger students. Lunches are packed the night before and eaten in the cafeteria where juice and milk are available. Lunch is served in the cafeteria between 12 and 1PM. The evening meal is offered between 4:45 and 5:30-no exceptions-though dorm staff can and do 'save you a plate' up on the 3rd floor if you ask real nice. 'Res' kids involved in after school sports would often have a plate saved for them. Snacks are available during the evenings in the 'res' including cookies and muffins and juice. Day students arrived by bus before 9AM, brought lunch with them to eat in the cafeteria, and left by bus around 3:45PM. A few students lived close enough to either walk or catch a city bus to and from school. 'Res' kids either go home, or to a type of 'foster' home on the weekends.

Census: The principal is a hearing person, as are all of the secretarial staff in the main floor office. Teachers are a mixture of Deaf, hard of hearing (culturally Deaf), and hearing individuals (both male and

female). The kitchen staff consists of one hearing, one Deaf and one Child of Deaf Adults (CODA)-all male. The janitors are all Deaf, male and female.

There are approximately 85 students in total at the school. Of these, approximately 12 to 15 students are 'res' kids, ranging in age from about 6 to 16 years of age. The students come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds representative of the city itself, though there are a higher number of First Nations students (their families typically live in rather isolated areas up north). A number of students come from recent immigrant families, where Chinese or Taiwanese may be spoken or signed at home. Some students have Deaf parents and/or siblings, while others come from entirely hearing families.

Some of the students have attended the school from kindergarten onward. Some of the students were transferred in from their home schools within the city or the province after several unsuccessful or unsatisfying years in that setting. These students may be more 'English' than the students who have been in the school for the Deaf from the start; this is typically as a result of being surrounded entirely by hearing people and having no or minimal contact with a Deaf community of any kind. As noted, some students are immigrants with neither English nor ASL as a first language. The range of language backgrounds is wide.

The Informants

The teacher informants chosen were a third, seventh, and ninth grade teacher, each with extensive teaching experience in schools for the Deaf; all were female.

Marianne (a pseudonym) is a hard of hearing person with a total of 26 years of teaching experience, five years in a mainstream setting, and 21 years in a residential (school for the Deaf) setting. She has a Bachelor of Education in Special Education, and is currently teaching a third grade class of 5 students from entirely hearing families. Cassie is hard of hearing, but considers herself culturally Deaf. She is married to a Deaf man who teaches Science at the school. Both are American. Cassie attended a public day school while growing up, and was mainstreamed with other hearing impaired students. Cassie received her Master of Arts from Gallaudet, and has taken post graduate courses since then.

She has 12 years of teaching experience, 7 years in a mainstreamed setting and 5 years in a residential setting. She is currently teaching a 7th grade class of 6 students. One of the students comes from an entirely hearing family; three of the students have hearing parents, but Deaf or hard of hearing siblings; one of the students has Deaf parents, and has Deaf and hearing siblings; and one student is from an entirely Deaf family. Angela is hearing person with 17 years of teaching experience (combined) in mainstream and residential school settings. She has a Bachelor of Education and Master of Deaf Education degree. She is currently teaching a 9th grade class of 4 students. Two of the students come from entirely hearing families; one student has Deaf parents, and a hearing sibling, while one has Deaf parents, and Deaf and hearing siblings.

The success of whole language native language bilingual classrooms depends greatly on teachers. Their native language preparation, beliefs and attitudes about language and reading learning influences teaching style (Goodman et. al., 1979, as in Carrasquillo & Hedley, 1993). I asked each informant about their first language as well as their experience with sign language.

Marianne's first language is English; she learned Signing Exact English (SEE) first, then worked in a Total Communication (TC) situation in which Signed English and voice are used simultaneously. She has taken some ASL courses in the intervening years. Cassie's first language is English; she learned a pidgin sign in high school from her hearing impaired peers in the mainstream. Pidgin Sign English (PSE) is described as being the result of contact between the Deaf and hearing worlds; it has English word order but uses many of the conceptually complex signs of ASL for more efficient communication. Cassie continued her use of PSE in college when doing her undergraduate work. Later, during graduate work at Gallaudet (the only university in North America where ASL is the language of instruction), she learned about other sign systems such as Signed English, ASL, and cued speech. While she taught in the mainstream, she used Signed English during the day and then went home to communicate in ASL with her Deaf husband. Angela's first language is English. She learned a PSE first, then later learned ASL at a time when its use was not permitted in the classroom. She worked in a

TC setting for a long time, and has been taking ASL instruction through the ASL specialist at the school during the last 5 to 6 years as the bi/bi policy has been implemented.

Findings

Teaching Styles

Through observations and videotaping interactions in classrooms, interviews with teachers, and documentation, data relevant to the research question was compiled. While a number of themes emerged, the focus of this paper will be teaching style. This category included a variety of items, the most significant of which seems to have been scaffolding, and structure or routines. Scaffolding included such things as providing explanations, conferencing, providing corrective feedback, modeling clarification strategies (giving and asking for clarification), modeling reading strategies, and talking explicitly about language use. Structure or routines included items such as establishing procedures for reader/writer workshop, defining story schema elements, having regular sustained/free reading times, and conducting regular large group discussions around cloze, problem solving literacy events, and whole literature.

Read and Think Riddles

I asked each informant if they felt there was any single most important factor in helping students develop skills/fluency in both ASL and English. Marianne is a third grade teacher who felt that the most important factor was that students needed to understand that communication is 'a two-way street'; this included being able to maintain appropriate eye contact with a communication partner, the ability to take turns within a conversation and stay on topic. She felt that such communication does not consistently occur in the homes of her students and this contributed to their lack of communicative competence. "some of them have absolutely nothing to say because things went on, and they did lots of things but there was no language to go with it....Communication happens not only between kids and teachers but between kids, and you can communicate about the subject matter. And you're expected to communicate about the subject matter." (Bi-15, 3-5, 8-10).

On a more explicit level, each informant was able to talk about some of the things they specifically 'work on' in the classroom. For Marianne, clear expression by the students was of great concern. She wanted them to be able to identify topics, understand and use wh-questions in both ASL and English. She had developed short controlled vocabulary teacher made books for bulk reading purposes, designed to mesh with the Reading Milestones series which she also used. She and the resource teacher have created a graded inventory of trade books which could be used to supplement the use of this series. She felt that being able to read and retell (whether sentence by sentence, through drawing or acting out) was significant in helping students develop an understanding of language in general.

Marianne's overall purpose was the basic development and awareness of language and communication in the context of emerging literacy behaviors and skills in order to facilitate the negotiation of meaning. Regular routines in the classroom included daily free reading by individual students, reading 'aloud" to the children as a group, daily group conversational sharing time, and a special series of problem solving literacy events using riddles.

In each routine, Marianne's scaffolding revolved around a central theme of Read and Think. If students had questions about what they were reading during free reading time, she asked them to re-read and think about what they thought it meant, then to tell her what they thought.

> So I have a whole lot of books that I have written...uses the vocabulary progressively throughout the levels and uses it in different manners. So I'm going to make sure that they can read those things and retell them. 9i-5, 12 to 9i-6, 1-3

During reading to the large group, she would give an ASL summary first, then read in English. On one occasion, she stopped and talked about English/ASL differences like he/she vs. the deictic point. She modeled the kind of language she wanted them to use, and demonstrated meanings through giving examples, focusing on picture clues and the word itself.

During riddles (designed to get them to make predictions and to use certain targeted language forms in the context of a problem solving situation), she advised students to read and think. She also reminded them of English/ASL differences since the riddles were written in English. Students responded orally in some cases, and were allowed to write or draw to give their answers to scenario style problem solving riddles.

Discussion and Discovery

Cassie is a 7th grade teacher who felt that the most important factor in the classroom was respect for the students as Deaf people; for her, that translated into not talking down to students, having respect for and playing up to student strengths. It also meant not helping them too much, breaking down skills to facilitate independent student achievement. Finally, Cassie felt very strongly that teacher competence in both English and ASL is essential: "respect also in my mind means that if I'm teaching a Deaf class using ASL, I had better do it the right way or not do it at all. So I feel like, um, or signing English, like whatever it is, whatever the mode is, do it right or don't do it at all." (7i-11,11-12; 7i-12, 1-2).

On a more explicit level, in the classroom, Cassie felt that "the biggest challenge is to get them on some kind of common ground so they can even talk about a sentence, 'what is a sentence?', you know, to get them all on par so that we can express ourselves using the same terms. And then...by the time they've come though the 6th grade, they have some similar background experiences. Like they've all been to a park or they've all been to a zoo or something that you can build on so..."(7i-3, 5-11). Recognizing the diversity of students that attend this school, Cassie commented on the importance of the need for common terminology, as well as establishing the predictability of language, context and picture clues which make it easier for any reader/writer to make connections and build on knowledge. As part of this building knowledge, Cassie felt that peers are an important source of learning for each other. Being able to explain to a peer not only reinforces for the 'expert', but also often provides better scaffolding sometimes than the teacher can. Cassie also stated that she focused on how well the students expressed themselves in ASL and English, as well as how well they understood English print

(technically, there is no written form of ASL). As a member of the curriculum committee, Cassie had helped develop not only a guiding philosophy but also a list of specific possible activities for teachers to use based on what fits an individual's style and skill level so one year builds on another.

Cassie's overall purpose was the use of discussion and discovery to help students negotiate meaning and develop metalinguistic awareness. She routinely used the overhead to showcase student writing and questions about what they were reading, as well as to present different kinds of cloze activities. when student work/questions were used, the teacher provided scaffolding through ASL discussion of sentences in which all students participated and by having peers work together to edit sentences to make them more English. the teacher modeled correct form if students did not get it on their own, or if they seemed to need review. Cassie encouraged them to consider what their goal is, what do they want to communicate? Though discussion was in ASL, sentences were practiced in English to see how they 'felt'. Unknown words drawn from student reading were looked at in context and discussed by all in order to negotiate the exact meaning of each.

During cloze activities, she invited best guesses, encouraging students to ask themselves about what makes the most sense. She encouraged them to use context and background knowledge. When a topic unfamiliar to some of the students arose, she let them knowledgeable students explain and give examples. When an answer was given, she asked how the students arrived at their conclusions...how did they know??

> I want the student himself to know he was aware of something. Like a lot of times he'll say "Oh, I saw a clue"...I use that word; they have to know clue and then you know they never thought of reading as having clues. A lot of kids just think you know the word or you don't. They don't really understand that there are lots of different clues in there, that you just have to know what to look for...I don't wanna always be the one explaining because sometime

> they like to hear it from their peers and it also helps that peer. They know what they did but hen if they can express it, it kind of instills a little bit stronger in their own mind on what they did. 7i-3, 12 to 7i-9, 1-9

She also provided feedback about the reasonableness of their guesses. Further, she talked explicitly about what they were doing, and reviewed these strategies often. The could use picture clues, re-read, read on, using context and background knowledge to question themselves about what made sense. In some cases, she used poetry and showed just the title or picture while asking for predictions what it would be about. This was discussed in ASL, and English equivalents were generated. The messages or poems were re-read in English when all the blanks had been filled in. The whole class often read aloud together and discussed meanings.

> When I write my own cloze sentences, I set it up so it lends itself to being very very clear...These kids are 13 or something and I can't give them "See Spot run". I have to give them something that means something...They see that it does make sense and it does fit. 7i-7, 1-7

Reader/writer workshop

When asked about what was most important in the classroom, Angela is a 9th grade teacher who felt that equal exposure to both languages was necessary, as was a balance between focus on language and literacy. On a more explicit level, Angela had been significantly influenced with regard to how literate behaviors and skills could be developed as a result of attending an ESL (English as a Second Language) through ASL workshop at Gallaudet a few years ago. She was encouraged to read Nancie Atwell's In The Middle, which became her inspiration for using reader/writer workshop for a year with a pilot group. After that first year, "I felt YES, I definitely definitely definitely believe in the reading-writing connection and that you need to be doing both together. The more you read, the better your written English will be and the better your written English, the more you can read" (8i-5, 2-5). More specifically, she felt that learning about story schema in reading would make that information available for the

students when they take on the task of writing. With regard to writing, Angela felt it was important to let students write from their own experiences first. Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) was also important to her as a means of getting the students hooked on reading while literature logs (journals in which students typically summarize and/or respond to what they are reading) provide the means for discussing the books.

Angela's overall purpose was to build on (presumed) pre-existing metalinguistic awareness in order to encourage the negotiation of meaning in more advanced reading and writing grounded in whole literature and the students' own writing. The structure provided by the teacher was the routine of the reader/writer workshop process. Students read and respond in writing to whole literature (some of it their own choosing, some of it 'required'). They are also simultaneously writing about whatever is of interest to them, and editing the work until both they and the teacher agree that it is finished, a publishable piece. Sustained silent reading by all was a daily part of the routine.

> with the sustained silent reading time I hope that they can get hooked
> on reading and just to develop that love of reading which will take them...
> for the rest of their lives..which will help them in all of their schooling.
> And also, um, lit logs are a great way for discussing the books. And then
> every once in awhile, we'll discuss them amongst each other and
> share so that we'll encourage them to read other books 8i-7, 2-4, 6-9

As part of this framework, Angela provided scaffolding in terms of explicit information about story schema elements (setting, episodes, etc) which would be useful in helping them in understanding the work of others and improving their own work. Notes on these elements were in English while the discussion was in ASL; she encouraged them to think critically about these elements while reading and writing. The elements are reviewed often as the students participate in various literacy events (reading books, reading each others work and writing and editing their own work). As well, a common proofreading sheet was introduced sot hat they would all be using the same editing language as they

moved through this process. Notes were in English, discussed in ASL, and meshed with examples from their own writing. Students were not completely familiar with reader/writer workshop, so the teacher provided modeling of how to do conferences initially before students were encouraged to conference with each other. Angela provided specific praise about items, gave an ASL summary of the story and then asked for clarification of meaning about specific points. Once the intended meaning was established in ASL, then discussion of how to communicate hat in English could begin. Angela also provide specific feedback about one or two items that she felt the student need dot work on as they edited their rough drafts. this could be anything from organization of paragraphs to consideration of story elements.

> like so many times when you get a first story there's no problem to it? There's a beginning, a middle, and an end but there's no problem, there's no conflict that is resolved and nothing learned from it. And so when they've read and they understand it then "Oh, oh, OK" Now they know how they should be improving their stories. So I definitely believe in the reading-writing connection. I definitely believe in um the writing process. And starting, letting students write from their own experiences first. There are things that you have to teacher in school such as essays. But I'll hold off on that a little while until they're feeling comfortable with the writing process and then I'll teach some of the required things 8i-5, 12 to 8i-6, 1-9

Portfolios and conferences were also part of this process. Angela provided basic information about how the portfolios would be structured, and discussed with the students the idea of setting goals and being ready for evaluation (self and teacher) every 6 weeks. Specific questions were posed which the students were to be ready in advance to discuss at evaluation time. These included what does a good writer do?, what is your best work and why? Where are you getting your ideas from? What is the most important learning for you so far?

Conclusions

According to Spradley (1980), analysis in qualitative research is a search for patterns through examination of the collected data in a study. For social interactionists, interpretation comes through understanding group actions and interactions. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), this interpretation is made by both the social actors and by the researcher. It is within the social interactionist context which analysis of field notes, interviews, and documentation was conducted. Analysis of videotapes has been conducted through independent study with Dr. R. Kretschmer; it has been used as cross reference for the analyses of other data.

Since language is recognized as the means for representing thought and as the vehicle for complex thinking, the importance of allowing children to use and develop the language they know best becomes obvious. In a bilingual program, students use the language they understand best to explore, interpret and construct meaning, and therefore, are better able to remember and manipulate complex concepts (Carrasquillo & Segan, 1984, as in Carrasquillo & Hedley, 1993). Teachers help students reach their maximum level of growth by providing students with the chances for verbal interaction with adults who have command of language.

Each teacher used different kinds of leading (scaffolding) within structures (routines) order to achieve different linguistic purposes. Marianne's purpose was the basic development and awareness of language and communicative competence in the context of emerging literacy. She used a read and think approach in most of what she did to encourage the negotiation of meaning, and established a structure to encourage bulk reading that would assist in the development of students' literate behaviors. Cassie's purpose was the use of discussion and discovery to help students negotiate meaning and develop metalinguistic awareness. Angela's purpose was to build on pre-existing metalinguistic awareness in order to encourage the negotiation of meaning in more advanced reading and writing grounded in whole literature and the students' own writing (reader/writer workshop).

These carefully selected and structured tasks provide the chance for more able language users to be models and act as teachers. Cooperative learning tasks such as peer editing of sentences in Cassie's classroom, or conferencing in Angela's classroom are one way of doing this. The advantage of student to student interaction is the chance to use language productively. Language output or production is very important as part of negotiation of meaning. Language production skills such as speaking and wiring etc. proceed from comprehending input. Active production of language in communication interaction is important to make more comprehensible input but also in order to make language. language production is important because it serves as a means for learner to test hypotheses about elements and rules of language use. Cassie's students were discovering that knowing the grammatical rules is not always necessary for comprehension because in general the rules don't relate to semantics (underlying meaning). The meaning of messages can be negotiated from contextual cues and does not depend on precise grammatical analysis of message. Marianne established a conversation/sharing period during the day which she hoped would help her students try out the rules of expression to see if they work. Knowing the grammatical rules is not always necessary for comprehension because in general the rules don't relate to semantics (underlying meaning). Opportunities for language interactions provide the learners with practice in putting the language together in order to negotiate meaning.

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